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Democracy in Education ; Education for Democracy.

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THE AWAKENING

This is the Ground-hog Day of our educational Awakening.

One by one we are thrusting our Heads out from the Holes that we or others have dug.

Few of us will venture far from Home. For our Eyes will blink in the Searching Light; and our Bodies will shrink from the Chilling Blasts.

Besides, our Shadows will frighten us—all of us that are real ground-hogs. And back to the Holes that held us we will go—all that are real ground-hogs.

A few there were last year—and the year before—that stayed in the Light. It gave them Hope. And they let the Blast blow. It gave them Stimulus.

But they stopped being ground-hogs.

DO NOT CLIP
THIS NUMBER

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF

CHARLES W. ELIOT

President Emeritus, Harvard University

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL System of Greater New York is a huge, complicated machine which ought to be running smoothly and completely every school day in the year, and in part time on holidays and during vacations from 8 in the morning until 10 at night. It includes, and ought to include, many different kinds of schools, such as elementary, vocational, special, secondary, and trade schools both day and evening, and should embrace an ample provision for recreation-centres, vacation schools, and superintended playgrounds. To do the work which urgently needs to be done it ought to employ at least 20,000 persons, and should daily serve at least 700,000 children and a large number of adults. The Board of Education should give general direction to this great system of public instruction; that is, should determine its policies, appoint the chief executive officers, fix the rules under which all appointments are made, and maintain, thru well-organized, expert services, a constant supervision over the actual work going on, and an unremitting study of desirable improvements and enlargements.

To accomplish these purposes, what is the best size for the Board of Education? Sound theory and recent successful experience in many parts of the country indicate that a small board, consisting of from five to twelve members, is much more effective than a large board, such as New York now employs. A small board, the members of which are replaced gradually and never many at once, can sit around a small table and talk together in conversational tones without excitement or occasion for oratory; and a majority of its members at any particular moment will always have had some expe-

rience. A large board like the present board in New York, which has forty-six members, cannot enjoy these advantages. Much experience has already been acquired in educational and business corporations in favor of small boards of directors, which give no room for dummies, or for the separate representation of small geographical areas, or of insignificant local interests. Greater New York, comprising two large boros and three smaller, might appropriately create a Board of Education of seven members—or nine if it were that important—to represent proportionately the different masses of population in the several boros; but for the business efficiency seven members would undoubtedly be better than nine. In either case no more than two members should be replaced in any year; so that the length of first term service should be four years in a board of seven, or five years in a board of nine, members being eligible to re-election.

This small board should exercise no executive functions whatever. The present board of forty-six members undertakes to exercise executive functions in great variety thru its committees, the board maintaining no fewer than sixteen standing committees, all of which exercise executive functions. There is hardly a person on the present board who could properly be called an educational expert. It was never intended, or expected, that the Board of Education should itself be composed of educational experts; and yet it tries to do in some fashion an immense mass of expert work brot before it by its committees, agents, or subordinate boards; but all to be acted upon by the Board itself. An examination of the docket of any meeting of the New York Board of Education will convince any one who has had experience in any sort of governmental, educa-

*Address delivered before the Public Education Association, New York, Jan. 21, 1914.

tional or business administration that the executive functions exercised by the present Board of Education are inappropriate to such a board, and that efficiency is not to be expected of a board which works on such a plan. I cite from the minutes of a recent meeting of the Board a few typical items of business transacted:

The discontinuance of Public School 70 and the transfer of eight pupils to Public School 87.

The nomination of five teachers of physical training for elementary schools.

The transfer of a woman principal from one school to another.

The nomination of two teachers for one of the training schools for teachers.

The compensation of janitors in public school buildings.

The sale of products of the Parental School and the Manhattan Trade School for Girls.

The establishment of the position of bricklayer at 75c per hour, or \$6 per day.

Purchase of some furniture for schools named, and an equipment of wood-working tools for a high school.

Appointments of some clerks, stenographers and typewriters.

The promotion of one stenographer.

The dismissal of a cleaner for neglect of duty.

The dismissal of a janitor.

Small appropriations for various constructions and repairs.

The suspension of a draughtsman.

The appointment of three thermostat repairers.

The excusing of a school principal for absence one morning.

The transfer of three janitors.

The appointment of a fireman in a public school.

Increasing the salaries of two cleaners.

The payment of a bill of costs in a proceeding for the acquisition of title for part of a proposed school site.

The appointment of an auto-truck driver for the Bureau of Supplies.

The lending of sixty desks and seats to Fordham University.

The compensation of a machinist.

The dispensing with the services of certain clerks in the Bureau of Supplies.

Permission to the principal of a school to hold the graduation exercises of the school in a Y. M. C. A. building.

These are fair samples of the administrative details that came before the Board of Education at its meeting on January 14, 1914.

No person experienced in any sort of administration—governmental, educational or industrial—would believe that the Board of Education was competent to deal effectively or wisely with such matters, or could properly be charged with such functions. Any competent railroad, bank or factory manager who examined the administrative structure of the New York Public School System would be sure to ask, "How has it been possible to maintain under such a Board with such functions even the present inadequate system?" The answer to this question is that the city has had the devoted services of a remarkable Superintendent and of thousands of teachers who were faithful to their calling and their pupils in spite of many trials and discouragements.

The functions of the New York Board of Education should be confined to the determination of general policies, the appointment of the principal executive officers of the system on the Board's own initiative, the appointment of lesser officers on the nomination of superior officers, and the maintenance, thru carefully selected experts, of thoro inspection, supervision, accounting and publicity. The merit system should, of course, be applied thruout the service to both appointments and promotions.

The members of the Board should be men of sound professional or business experience, high character, and eminent public spirit, who are willing to give a considerable portion of their time in afternoons or evenings to the general direction of the public school

system. Every member should be a successful man of affairs, whether professional or commercial, and a patriotic citizen.

The principal executive officers to be appointed by such a board should be: a Superintendent for all educational matters with any needed number of assistants nominated by the Superintendent in specified departments or divisions of his work; a Business Manager to control the expenditures for supplies, service and maintenance of both buildings and equipment; a Comptroller for disbursements, accounts and summarized monthly reports; a Recorder who would keep the records of the Board itself and of any subsidiary boards whose proceedings nearly concern the proper work of the principal Board, and on the basis of these records give to the public, from time to time, those items of public school business which the general public ought to hear about; an Architect and an Engineer to design new buildings and constructions, manage lighting and heating plants and playgrounds, and make recommendations concerning purchases of lands and buildings. These principal officers should be supplied with all needed assistance on a scheme adopted by the Board; and the whole executive work of the School System should be in the hands of these officers and their assistants.

The Board should organize on a general plan local visiting boards, having no authority or administrative function, and maintain stated intercourse with these boards. The Board should also enact the rules of discipline for the entire system, but always with the advice of the chief executive officers. It should provide a systematic method of dealing with complaints and grievances wherever originating, whether with the staff, the teachers, parents, pupils or the press. This should include a preliminary inquiry, an appeal to an impartial tribunal, and finally, in difficult cases, an appeal to the Board itself. Provision should also be made for recognized associations of the

teachers in the different divisions of the school system, such as elementary, secondary, vocational and evening schools, which should hold stated meetings to discuss matters of common interest, to conduct thru committees appropriate inquiries and studies, and to recommend improvements to the superior officers.

The question whether the Board of Education should be elected at large or appointed is a local question which cannot be answered uniformly for all American communities. Most American towns and cities elect their school boards or committees, and much prefer to do so; but between an elective and an appointive method each community should give the preference to that method which will best bring well-informed public opinion to bear on the choice of the members of the Board. In Boston, where elections are still annual in most cases, it has thus far been possible to bring a sound public opinion to bear on the selection of candidates for the school committee of five to be elected at large, two members a year twice and one member in the third year; and ever since the city secured this small school committee the voters have elected wisely. In St. Louis, where a committee of twelve is elected at large, by selections, the choice made by the electors was for several years admirable. Later the quality of the Board degenerated somewhat, but from this lapse there is now recovery. In cases where an appointive method is preferred the appointing power should be very carefully selected. The Mayor is a natural selection, but there have been many cases where the voters have chosen good candidates for the school board and simultaneously a poor candidate for Mayor. The fact seems to be that most American communities will take more interest, and show greater discretion, in the selection of a school board than of any other municipal officers.

A city which has found means to procure a good school board should also find the means of providing the

board with an independent income sufficient for present needs, and rising automatically if the needs increase because of an increase in the school population. The school board should not be obliged to ask for appropriations from any other municipal board or authority, unless, indeed, in cases of emergency or of sudden demands in the interest of the children which could not have been anticipated. The independent income of the board should cover the average annual needs for the purchase of sites and the erection and equipment of buildings, and if there are serious deficiencies to be made up in respect to lands and buildings, these deficiencies should be taken into account in determining, in the first instance, the amount of the independent income of the board.

The method of putting at the disposition of a board of education or school committee so many mills on every dollar of valuation is a convenient one, because in a growing town or city an experienced school board can under such a provision of the law foresee with approximate accuracy its increasing income, and make provisions beforehand for its most advantageous expenditure. Thus, the Board of Education of St. Louis, being provided with 6 mills on every dollar of valuation was able to buy beforehand, at low rates, school sites in outlying parts of the city which they foresaw would soon be occupied by a dense population, and to make ready for that coming population the school buildings it would need. Only a committee with an independent income, working thru a body of educational and business experts in considerable variety, is capable of doing such economical and farseeing work. Only state legislation contained in the city's charter, or a special statute, can provide a board of education with an independent and rising income, for ordinances on this subject passed by a municipal board could be repealed by the same board.

The New York Board of Education possesses neither an independent in-

come nor control over its expenditures. The City Comptroller's staff suggests changes in the estimates submitted by the Finance Committee of the Board of Education; the Board of Estimate and Apportionment modifies them and the Board of Aldermen may reduce them. Salary schedules are fixed, and the numbers of employees allowed is specified by the Fiscal Departments of the city. These complicated dispositions gravely impair the efficiency and responsibility, and therefore the serviceableness and dignity of the Board of Education. Americans competent as regards wisdom, skill and character can always be found to serve on a school board which has a free hand and an independent income and the responsibility which goes with freedom; but such Americans often feel that their sacrifices are made in vain when they work on a board or committee which has not complete control of either income or expenditure, cannot organize its own staff, knows that its work is inadequate and gravely defective, but cannot shield itself from undeserved blame because of the confusion or bad distribution of functions and responsibilities.

The dependence of the New York Board of Education seems to have been due, in part, to the adoption by the city, under the lead of many good citizens, of a policy of bringing the expenditures of the city under the control of one central, well-selected board. There are many good arguments in favor of this general policy, but it does not apply well to the Board of Education. In regard to the public schools economy of expenditure is not the prime consideration. It should be the policy of any city to spend as much on its public schools as can be spent in conformity with discreet, cautious, well-considered educational plans made by experts; not as little as possible, but as much as possible should be the city's policy. From the material or pecuniary point of view a frugal policy of expenditure on education is dangerous; for nothing in national, state and mu-

municipal expenditures pays so well as expenditure on the education of children and adults. The experience of the country at large during the past twenty years has given many new proofs of this proposition. A good school administration will always aim at preventing wastes, or expenditures which yield inadequate return, but it should always be devising new directions of expenditure and trying to make fresh improvements.

No board of education can possibly be highly efficient which does not know even approximately what its income is to be, not for one year merely, but for two, three or four years in advance, for educational plans need time for their development under the guidance of an expert staff and a governing board which can work on a steady, far-

reaching policy, and is not forced to live from hand to mouth.

This association doubtless realizes that the problems it is studying have an interest for the American public which far transcends the limits of this metropolitan city, vast as it is. When the City of New York fails to carry on wisely and well any important public work, the whole country suffers from the bad example; when New York carries on well any large piece of public administration it confers benefits on the whole country. This is my excuse for accepting your invitation to speak to you about the best structure and the proper functions of the Board of Education for New York City. There is nothing in public administration so important to the prosperity and happiness of our common country as the right organization of universal education.

THE ELEMENTS OF A JUST PENSION LAW

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THE PENSION FUND to which the teachers of New York City have been contributing is insolvent. While the contributions have been made compulsory, the city has not been obliged to guarantee pensions to the teachers. This is a weakness in the present law which must be remedied. The teachers will not submit to a greater assessment upon their salaries until some guarantee is furnished them that they shall receive a pension after a certain term of service.

Any pension system should have a sound basis and should express certain fundamental ideas of social justice. Pension experience is of comparatively short duration and hence cannot furnish a safe guide. Still, the most should be made of such experience as may be found. Instead of sitting down in a quiet corner of a library and drawing up a bill granting the comfortable pensions teachers would like, it would be wiser to study and report on the best pension experience to the present

time. Unfortunately this is not being done.

Even if a bill is to be drawn without the aid of such study, there are certain elements of safety and justice which can be demanded.

(1) The city should take over the fund and establish the pension system on a firm basis. This should be done even tho the size of the pensions need to be reduced. No intelligent moral person would choose to gamble on a pension which is to serve him as a support in his old age.

(2) Each teacher should pay 1 per cent. of his salary into the fund, and at the end of each five years of service he should have the option of increasing the per cent. of salary deduction in order to increase the amount of his annuity upon retirement. If he pays \$20 a year for thirty-five years, and retires at the age of 60, his own contributions would provide an annuity of about \$125. Using these figures as a basis, it appears that an annuity of \$625 would require a con-

tribution of \$100 annually for a period of thirty-five years, with retirement at the age of 60. Should the age of retirement be placed at 50 years, the annuity would then be only about three-fourths as large; the number of contributions being less would still further decrease the size of the annuity.

(3) The full pension of each person—regardless of position or salary—should be made up by the city (say \$800), to which should be added such annuity as the pensioner's own contributions, compounded at 4 per cent., would furnish on an actuarial calculation. Suppose the city furnish the \$800, then a person who pays \$20 a year for thirty-five years, and retires at 55 years of age, would receive a full pension of about \$900. In a similar manner a \$1,200 pension would be a possibility for a large number of teachers, while those in the better paid positions could easily bring their annuities up to \$1,500 or more.

The cost to the city of retiring 100 teachers each year on an \$800 pension would be less than a million dollars. The increase in the number of teachers to be retired is the unknown quantity hardest to estimate. But it is clear that the increase will be so great and so rapid that an actuary should report on the condition of the fund at least every five years.

Should the city find it unwise to pay more than \$600 annually to each teacher on the retired list, it would still be possible for the poorest paid teacher to secure a pension of at least \$700, for many to secure pensions of \$1,000, and for the best paid to secure a pension of \$1,200 or more. Even these small sums would stand out among pensions as generous.

(4) The contribution of any person withdrawing from the system for any cause whatever after the first five years should be returned to him or, in case of death, to his heirs. This would serve as a slight life insurance in case of death. It would also leave no objection to increasing the contributions to more than 1 per cent. of salary.

(5) An age limit for retirement with full pension should be fixed at 55 years. Then a teacher should be given the option retiring at 50 years of age on a proportionately reduced pension, provided he had served thirty years.

This particular demand of justice is probably the least popular of all the points mentioned in this article. But a few facts may throw some light upon the subject. For instance, at the age of 50 the "expectation of life" is 20.91 years, while at 60 it is only 14.10 years. Again, an annuity of \$800 at 50 years of age would have a value of about \$12,000, but at 60 it would have a value of about \$9,500. So the person of 50 retired on a pension of \$800 would receive a greater value by \$2,500 than another at 60 retired on the same pension.

(6) A retirement for disability should be granted after ten years of service on a proportionately reduced pension. Due to the eagerness of some to protect the fund, little consideration is being given to this class of beneficiaries. They should receive first attention in planning a pension system. In Germany and Austria a single relief payment is made to a teacher disabled before ten years of service, after which time a pension is granted for disability. In the United States the following cities retire disabled teachers on a pension after the number of years stated: Denver, 10; Boston, 2. Minneapolis, 2; St. Paul, 5; Harrisburg, 5; Philadelphia, 5; Pittsburg, 10; Providence, 10.

(7) The permanent fund should be steadily increased to keep pace with the increase in the number of pensioners. This could be done (a) by having an additional 5 per cent. of the excise money granted, to be added directly to the permanent fund, or (b) by having the city at once turn over to the permanent fund the three or four million dollars of state school money it has held since the time of consolidation. In this way the fund could soon be brought up to ten million dollars without any great drain upon the city's resources.

Pension legislation is being planned. If the cost must be limited, certain selfish interests will creep in. The class with the greatest influence is likely to appropriate to itself the lion's share. Therefore the class made up of the largest numbers, with justice on their side, should unite solidly to demand what is due them. By such united effort only can they win what by right is theirs.

THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT

The most difficult, the most critical position in public education is occupied by the city superintendent. His duties are not defined by law. In practise, however, they have come to be rather definitely defined. He should be, and in most instances is, the expert adviser of the board of education. He carries on such investigations as the board may request and reports his findings. He acts as the agent of the board in carrying into effect its rules respecting the organization and administration of the system of schools. But he is also, or should be, the adviser, the counselor, the leader of the teaching force. More than this—he should represent the teachers before the board of education as faithfully and as well as he represents the board before the teachers. He should be the teachers' friend at court. Further, the people have come to hold him responsible for the success or failure of the schools. Faults complained of may not result in any way from his plans or policies, but the public holds him responsible.

This brief outline of his duties sufficiently justifies the statement that his position is the most difficult and the most critical in public education. But the most important item has not been mentioned. He is elected for but one year and can be dismissed by the board at the end of any year without a statement of cause. There are many obstacles in public education which cannot be removed without a firm, resolute policy on the part of the superintendent. To carry out such a policy successfully may require five or ten years. The first year arouses the most violent opposition. The board

finds that the easiest way to quiet the complaint adopted by them. One or two more years and the plan would have won public approval, but one year leaves the matters so unformed that the policy is changed and the superintendent, with his reputation marred, must seek another place. Is it any wonder that superintendents become cautious and conservative?

In Germany, when a person has prepared himself for teaching or supervising and is admitted to the profession he acquires a life tenure. In the state of Illinois we ought to give the city superintendent a term of four years to prove his success or his failure.—Educational Press Bulletin, January.

THE TEACHER'S POWER

At the second dinner of the Schoolmasters' Association of New York and Vicinity, for the season 1913-14, held on Friday evening, December 5, 1913, Professor Charles A. Beard of Columbia University stated that the French republic shows the power of teachers in a nation, illustrating this fact by citing that the present government was really achieved by a republican minority. This minority, within a quarter of a century, thru the schools, educated a people of monarchical tendencies into a republic.

The power of the teacher in the state is enormous. If teachers could come to some consensus as to what ought to be taught to train up a citizen, and could then follow out definite practises towards this end, the effect for good would be beyond the power of imagination. Professor Beard urged reducing the amount of attention now given to history and devoting more time to economics and modern politics. He also urged that citizens are not made merely by learning the machinery of government, and that civics must be taught from an ethical point of view. The whole program of studies should be bent to turn out good citizens.

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VOL. III FEBRUARY, 1914 No. 2

This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.

BESIDES GEOGRAPHY, WHAT?

THE AMERICAN TEACHER is being criticized unfavorably by many teachers, on the ground that the paper does not help them in their daily work with their geography, their arithmetic, or with other details of their plan books.

Without question we all need to know

better ways of getting results in our teaching from day to day. And the best of us are honestly trying to do good work with plan books, or in spite of them.

But who makes the plan books? Have the lessons of your experience gone into them? Have you felt free to object to their recommendations when trial showed they would not work? Furthermore, has it ever occurred to you that one of the administrative reasons there are such things as plan books is that among us are many teachers who have no ideas of their own?

If your chief want is more help from others, you are probably willing to give them what they may find convenient to have—submission. If you want to be a real teacher, developing insight, character and self-dependence in children, then in time you may feel like thanking The American Teacher for urging you to begin doing some thinking on your own account.

NEW COUNSEL FOR THE COUNCIL

One of the things which the teachers of New York City will soon begin to look for in the work of the new Teachers' Council is a professional grasp of administrative problems, as seen from the standpoint of teachers. Another will be some independence to begin work in a line not suggested to the Council by the Board of Education.

One of the problems which the Board itself will have to meet, with or without the assistance of the Council, is the decision on what shall be the standards for the selection of high school principals. It is a notorious fact which is beginning to worry the Board itself that at present no one can point to any standards, except the purely formal ones of certain kinds of experience.

In the absence of standards of general intelligence, character, and the comprehension of social and educational problems, the City is fortunate in having some high school principals who compare favorably with principals elsewhere.

Every one of them should be worthy of his great office. That every one is not is only too evident to those who teach in the high schools themselves.

Will the Teachers' Council break the trend of their somewhat conventional beginning, and take up a problem that means much for the professional content of teachers and the general welfare of the children?

THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

An institution is founded to meet some social need that has become conscious. But once founded, institutions tend to develop as tho they were independent of society and as tho they were ends in themselves. The attitude of the school man to new social problems will tell you whether for him the school is an instrument to serve mankind or an instrument to serve his personal needs—for a means of livelihood or for a means of expression, perhaps.

The City Superintendent of the New York schools is very much opposed to the teaching of sex knowledge and sex hygiene in the schools. The proper place for such teaching, he properly holds, is in the home. What if only a few children in a hundred have homes where such instruction is possible? What if very few parents are capable of giving instruction of that kind? That is not our concern. The homes must do their work, and the schools will do theirs. But if the home is really the place for sex instruction, it may be incumbent upon the schools to train up a generation of men and women with the knowledge and ability to supply this instruction in the home. After we have trained boys and girls for all the functions they are to perform in society when they are men and women, we may be in a position to stop and ask whether some of the school's activities may not properly be shifted back to the home.

A similar argument is often heard in opposition to the school lunch: the home is the institution to feed the children. Yes, but there are not enough of the right kind of homes to go around. Be-

sides, if the school is to do what even the schoolmen admit is within the province of the school—namely, provide mental pabulum and training—it is essential that the children come to their tasks properly nourished. However, the chief function of the school lunch is not to facilitate the work of the teacher in cramming information and correct answers into the skulls of the neglected children. It is to teach prospective mothers and fathers how to feed the children of the next generation efficiently.

The school does not exist for itself or for the teachers. Its proper functions are limited only by the consideration that some other agency is ready and able to perform a certain service better than the school. Within those limits everything that society needs to have done may well be referred to the one institution that stands for all the people as living beings.

SCHOOL HYGIENE

Should lunches be provided by the public schools?

Shall the open-air classroom replace the closed room?

Should school janitors be trained sanitarians?

Do we need dental clinics for all school children?

Send for bulletin 48, 1913, on school hygiene, just issued by the United States Bureau of Education. It gives a good summary of the work of the recent international congress on school hygiene held in Buffalo, and practically amounts to a symposium on health matters by leading physicians and educators.

The work of the dental clinics in Philadelphia, Hartford, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland and other cities; how children's eyes can be cared for during the period of school attendance; the psychological clinic and the spread of the movement for mental classification of children; the effects of athletics on health. These and many other features of the health supervision movement are discussed in the bulletin.

YOUR OLD AGE

It is eminently proper that in the progress of society the teachers should be among the leaders; and sometimes they really are. In most European countries the establishment of a system of teachers' annuities has served as a forerunner of a wide program of social legislation for the protection of other groups of workers. If teachers can contribute to the solution of the problem of how to protect their own old age, they will at the same time make a very important contribution to a very serious social problem.

Most of us feel that something should be done to protect us against the risks that we have in common with other workers, as well as against the risks that are peculiar to our calling. But the condition of teachers' pension funds in this country does not suggest that very much effective thinking has been applied to the problem. An analysis of what has been done here and abroad for the purpose of discovering sound principles to guide further action has been greatly needed. This need seems to have been met by the publication of Mr. Prosser's "The Teacher and Old Age."*

Earlier legislation in Europe provided for a straight pension paid by the state; recent tendency is toward a joint support by the public and the teacher, the latter contributing either thru a wage-deduction or thru a definite payment. This results practically in combining a pension with compulsory state insurance.

The spirit and tendency of European social insurance are best shown in the complete system for the protection of workers which Germany has worked out by assessing employers for the entire support of the

annuities for accident and for the partial support of those for old age and disability. The principles are asserted, both that the cost of these risks is a legitimate overhead charge against the business, the same as insurance against fire and repairs for wear and tear upon plant and machinery, and that a business profits indirectly by the moral effect of these safeguards upon the wage-earner.

"By assessing wage-earners for the support of the fund, protecting them against old age and incapacity, the principle is asserted that workingmen, for the sake of their own welfare, should be required to protect themselves against the uncertainties of life and provide for their failing years. By making it possible to retire the aged worker when he has outlived his efficiency, the principle has been asserted that the state must in some equitable way make provision for his retirement when, after he has passed the limit of his efficiency, his retention in industry means an economic waste to society and a handicap to the industry in which he is employed. By requiring all classes of wage-workers to pay something to the support of their own protection, the principle is asserted that the state, in order to promote thrift of its people and preserve itself from the burden of the indigent, must encourage thrift, stimulate and safeguard savings, and secure continuous faithful service to industry and to the nation.

Any proposed legislation on the subject of pensions, whether for teacher or policemen, for firemen or for street cleaners, must either meet these principles, or frankly challenge and refute them. In the light of these principles Mr. Prosser examines various schemes of teachers' retirement allowances. Moreover, every proposal is considered from the point of view of its possible effect upon the efficiency of the profession in performing its social service. It is after all this consideration that will determine the action of legislators, insofar as these truly represent the public will. How a suitable retirement system may influence the efficiency of the profession is stated by Mr. Prosser as follows:

*"The Teacher and Old Age." By Charles A. Prosser, secretary National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, with the collaboration of W. I. Hamilton, agent Massachusetts Board of Education. (Introduction by David Snedden, Commissioner of Education for the State of Massachusetts). Pp. xi + 140. Riverside Educational Monographs. Houghton-Mifflin Co. Price 60 cents.

By attracting and holding more desirable men and women in the profession; by guaranteeing in a way the future of those engaged in it, thus creating an attitude of mind favorable to good work; by the timely withdrawal of those who have given full service and are no longer able to meet the demands of the schoolroom.

But retirement allowances, like higher salaries, will not of themselves insure a better class of teachers unless their establishment goes hand in hand with the raising of standards for admission to the profession; on the contrary, without raising the standard these devices would but open the door for less desirable incumbents.

The details of a model pension or retirement law are discussed; and it would be well for all teachers to make themselves familiar with the various factors involved. The necessity for making one kind of provision for teachers already in service when a retirement act goes into effect, and a different kind of teachers entering service thereafter is pointed out; and the special features for each class are explained. The withdrawal equity for teachers who withdraw from a system or die before retirement, after having contributed to a fund, is something that appeals to our sense of justice; yet this feature is universal in the European system, and is universally lacking in the several systems in this country, with the single exception of the Massachusetts plan of 1913.

Practical suggestions on what needs to be done to obtain suitable legislation, a comparative table showing the existing pension systems in this country, a copy of the Massachusetts law and a selected bibliography help to make this a useful handbook on the whole subject of social insurance legislation as applied to the public school teachers.

A SCHOOL SURVEY BY TEACHERS

The survey idea is spreading; the live teacher's idea is spreading. The teach-

ers of Leavenworth, Kansas, have subscribed the necessary money for a survey of their school system. Scarcely less important is the fact that the Board of Education has subscribed to the fund. Superintendent Mark E. Moore of the Leavenworth schools says:

"These experts will check up everything from the details of administration in my own office to the janitorial service. Four universities and the State Normal are to dig down into the basic facts of our system.

If there is an ultimate measuring stick of excellence and accuracy, this survey shall use that measuring stick.

Its results shall be left in usable form for the use and benefit of our teachers and system."

The executive committee of the teachers has already decided that there are three things for the Consulting Engineers and their surveyors to do:

1. Ascertain the commendable things in the system.
2. Point out the defects in the system and spare no one.
3. Suggest constructive measures and methods in any and all lines of school activity.

Mr. P. Caspar Harvey, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Leavenworth teachers having the survey in charge, writes:

The purpose of the survey is to make the schools a vital part of the life of the town and a real force in Leavenworth.

The schools must serve the people better.

If the schools are to serve the public better, education in Leavenworth will be accomplishing what we want it to accomplish. This survey will tell us how to do that.

The best educational that we can find has consented to come here, *not to criticize*, but to raise our system to a higher degree of efficiency.

SIDETALKS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS III.

J. S.

TAKE THAT PROBLEM of the promotion of pupils. I heard one superintendent say that it had "got his goat," but he was an honest, if not an intelligent, superintendent. Otherwise he would have devised a new scheme for concealing the facts, and have let it go at that.

The money for supporting the schools is paid by the taxpayers, and the taxpayers are interested in seeing results. Among the possible and tangible results are the number of pupils that are past thru the schools in a given time. If the schools hold the pupils in a grade longer than they should, somebody will find it out and tell the people. The tangible result in that case will be trouble for the school system—and it has enough.

You have seen the difficulty met, and know that pupils never are promoted so rapidly as when you want to disarm criticism on that point.

Nevertheless, I have often wondered why none of the superintendents of my acquaintance didn't think of taking the public into its confidence on this important matter. What a fine way to blunt the shafts of unfair criticism, too!

I am not a politician, but this is the way I should go about it. I should publish the exact facts of promotion without quibbling, or without putting the city to the expense of employing educational Pinkertons to find them out. I should then say that the number was probably greater than it should be for reasons that would be obvious. That would be what they already know, but it would be comforting to them to have a superintendent own up. Having shown my willingness to be honest, I should then show some sign of intelligence by pointing out one of the most obvious of all the facts—that the curriculum was not adapted to living children.

Going deeper than most practical school men permit themselves to look, I should confess that many more living children would fail than actually do if it

were not for the practise of "easing up" on the requirements of the curriculum. I should have to state that forty per cent. of the pupil's work might be totally wrong, and he might still pass; also that sometimes the necessary sixty per cent. might be made up largely of what the teacher thot the pupil meant to do or say, added to what the teacher gave because she wanted to be fair.

Going deeper still, I should have to tell the people that the teachers of my system had never been trained to teach live children anyway. In fact, the teachers are socially dead themselves, and I should have to acknowledge my own former complicity in keeping them dead.

Humiliating as it would be to my sensitive spirit, I should clear the slate by telling how I had brot pressure to bear on the principals, and thru them on the teachers to pass high percentages of pupils. Yes, if I were the guilty man, I could be made to confess, whether I liked it or not, that I had promoted a gigantic campaign of lying simply and solely to make the records tell a story favorable to me and my system. And not the least evil of the whole business would be the servile attitude of the subordinates who helped to make the campaign an administrative success. Under such interpreters of the truth, may the Lord have mercy on the children!

Of course, I would be called a fool by friends who wouldn't mind stepping into my official shoes, but in the event of losing my job, I should have had the satisfaction of finishing my career by doing something that was not brot about by that infamous system which we professionally call "indirection," another name for lying by subterfuge.

Now, I shall not be surprised if none of you accept my advice to take the people into your confidence, for most of you, I imagine, came into your power under the tutelage of the stupidest of all experts—the professional politicians.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER is the only magazine of its kind in America.

THE MICHIGAN FEDERATION

Volume 1, No. 1, of *The Bulletin* made its appearance in January. It is the organ of The Michigan Federation of Teachers' Clubs, which comprise approximately 10,000 members.

One of the present issues before the teachers of Michigan is the passage of a teachers' retirement bill by the state legislature. In order to arouse the teachers themselves to the importance of the matter, the Board of Directors of the Federation have divided the state into districts, and have assigned to each teachers' club already established in the cities of the state certain counties in which propaganda is to be carried on.

The Educational Committee of the Federation believes that superintendents of schools and County Commissioners should encourage the formation of teachers' clubs for the following reasons:

1. Teachers' clubs develop professional spirit and loyalty.
2. Create a social life for all of the teachers.
3. Remove the unfortunate gulf often existing between high school and grade teachers.
4. Give the teachers prestige both in their own community and in the state.
5. Enable the teachers, as a body, to co-operate with other local organizations in all movements for the betterment of the community.
6. Place the teachers in a position to work with other teachers of the state in such movements as the one to secure a retirement salary system.

In January The Boston Teachers' Club opened its club house. Thus our New England neighbors are beginning to live.

Two carpenters and a plumber from England have recently been traveling in Belgium. They were awarded vocational scholarships, by means of which they are investigating old and new methods of house construction.

UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

Our universities are laboring under a bureaucratic form of government in which the initiative rests chiefly with the heads of departments, in which there is a constant struggle for power among the bureau heads, in which these same heads are the chief source of information and advice to the executive, in which most of the faculty have no voice in framing policies, and in which—at its worst—the student is concerned only to be counted and the public only to be milked. The extreme of degredation is reached when research is wholly neglected and teaching is regarded as only the excuse for material aggrandizement.

The bad state of affairs which we see every now and then in this or that department or college in all our universities cannot be regarded as the free choice of any group of men. I cannot conceive of any of these things being voted by members of a staff. These conditions are the result of the arbitrary power placed in the hands of single men without check or publicity. Such a system always breeds dishonesty and crime.

The remedy is to recognize the primary interest of every member of the staff, and to establish representative government in the university. On the whole and in the long run the combined judgment of the members of the staff of any department is sure to be better than that of any individual.

Self-government stimulates individual initiative, and calls forth ideas for the common good. The enjoyment of freedom and responsibility will make of a faculty morally strong and practically efficient men, and will call into the profession capable men, men robust in intellect and imagination, instead of the weaklings who now barter their souls for shelter from the perils of a competitive business world.—PROF. J. B. JOHNSTON, in *Science*, of December 26, 1913.

Vocational guidance has been introduced into the school system of Connecticut by a recent law.

SUPERVISORS

Unfortunately all supervisors are not to the same degree masters in their art and a source of real inspiration to the teachers who look to them for guidance. Some exert simply a negative influence. It may be that they in no sense shirk their duty and may visit the various classes committed to their care as often as they should. They simply upon the occasion of this visit—or possibly at a subsequent conference—pronounce the work good or remark that it was poor. If the teacher is told that her work is good, it may indeed secure for the supervisor her good will; but the amount of help she receives amounts to little. If she is told simply that her work is poor and that an improvement would be welcomed, we may reasonably expect that her work in the future will be even less efficient because of this condemnation.—The Elementary Teacher.

Dr. P. P. Claxton, U. S. Commissioner of Education, in his Letter of Transmittal in Bulletin No. 51 (1913) on "The Education of the Immigrant," says:

Most of the immigrants in recent years have little kinship with the older stocks of our population, either in blood, language, methods of thought, traditions, manners, or customs; they know little of our political and civic life and are unused to our social ideals; their environment here is wholly different from that to which they have been accustomed. Strangers to each other, frequently from countries hostile to each other by tradition, of different speech and creeds, they are thrown together, strangers among strangers, in a strange country, and are thought of by us only as a conglomerate mass of foreigners. With little attention to their specific needs, they are crowded into factories, mines and dirty tenement quarters, too often the prey of the exploiter in business and the demagogue in politics.

That these people are interested in the elementary education of their children, or at least obedient to the school attendance laws, is shown by the fact that the least illiterate element of our population is the native-born children of foreign-born parents. The illiteracy among the children of native-born parents is three times as great as that among the native-born children of foreign-born parents.

WHAT THEY SAY

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I want to start the new year right by acknowledging the receipt of "The American Teacher" for the last two years. I have received an inspiration each month from reading the little paper. Every teacher who has a spark of life left ought to read it. This morning I spent a half hour canvassing for new subscriptions. I am enclosing check for \$3 to pay for five beside my own.

MERLE W. RALPH.

Yonkers High School.

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I am enclosing a check for \$1 to renew my subscription to "The American Teacher" and also to secure an additional subscription to be sent. We have enjoyed looking over the breezy articles in your little paper and are desirous of keeping in touch with your progress.

JESSE B. DAVIS,

Principal Central High School, Grand Rapids, Mich.

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

Inclosed please find the price of two subscriptions to your fine paper, one for me, the other for any one else you wish—some poor fellow who doesn't know what he misses by not reading "The American Teacher."

WILLIAM NEIDLINGER.

New York City.

To the Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

You may be interested to know that some teachers refused to subscribe because they were "not willing to be annoyed by the ultra-simplified spelling in the pages." I have heard only praise for the matter and manner, except for the point mentioned.

SARA H. FAHEY.

Brooklyn.

What are you doing to spread the gospel? Send in a new subscription.

A Note from the Business Manager

That *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* has a mission to fulfill, that it is unique in its propaganda is now admitted by all thoughtful and progressive teachers who have become acquainted with it. Its principles and its ideals must ever be broadened, strengthened and deepened. The message of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* must be carried to an ever widening circle of teachers. Its influence and importance are proportional to the number and character of its subscribers.

For these reasons we invite you to interest your friends in *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* with a view to getting them to subscribe. We do not hesitate to make this request because we are not making it for the sake of business or profits. We make this request with the assurance that you want to help make *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* self-supporting and independent. The movement for the improvement of the working conditions of the teacher and for making teaching a dignified profession is contagious. We want you to spread the contagion. Get new subscribers.

Add this to your New Year resolutions:—**I MUST SEND IN A NEW SUBSCRIPTION TO THE AMERICAN TEACHER EACH MONTH.**

Do not hesitate to call for sample copies and descriptive literature to aid you in your campaign for subscriptions.

If you want further assistance send us the names and addresses of prospective subscribers and we will do the rest.

THE BUSINESS MANAGER.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER, 129 Lafayette Street, New York.

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